

PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION MINUTES

TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 2000

Chair Parsons called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. at Twin Pines Senior and Community Center.

PRESENT COMMISSIONERS: Phillips, Purcell, Petersen, Parsons

ABSENT COMMISSIONERS: Mathewson (arrived at 7:08 p.m.), Wiecha, Peirona (arrived at 7:08 p.m.)

PRESENT, STAFF: Principal Planner de Melo, Project Planner Ungo-McCormick, City Attorney Savaree, and Recording Secretary Wong

AGENDA STUDY SESSION

Principal Planner de Melo announced that: 1) agenda item 6A, 2101 Coronet Blvd., would be continued to May 16, 2000, and 2) agenda items 6B and 6C, an amendment to the parking ordinance and the single-family design review ordinance, would be continued to June 6 so that the Council and Planning Commission would have an opportunity to discuss these items at their joint meeting on May 16, 2000.

AGENDA AMENDMENTS: None.

COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments): None.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Action Minutes of March 21, 2000

MOTION: By Commissioner Phillips, seconded by Commissioner Purcell to approve the minutes. The motion passed with Commissioner Petersen abstaining.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Continued Public Hearing - 2101 Coronet Blvd.; To consider a side and rear yard setback variance and design review to allow 4'2" on the south side where 6' is required and 6' rear setback where 15' is required to allow an approximate 1,285 sq. ft. ground and second floor addition to an existing home (Appl. No. 99-1132); APN: 044-041-140; Zoning: R-1B; CEQA Status: Exempt; Oreste Cavallini (Applicant); Katherine Anderson (Owner)

Chair Parsons announced that this item would be continued to May 16, 2000 and asked if anyone would like to speak. No one came forward to speak. City Attorney Savaree advised that it was not necessary to open the public hearing on this item since there was no one in the audience wishing to discuss it.

Continued Public Hearing - To consider an amendment to Ordinance No. 360, Section 8, the parking ordinance, to require the upgrade of one-car residential garage to two-car garages when one or more bedrooms is being added (Appl. No. 00-1014); CEQA Status: Exempt; City of Belmont (Applicant)

Chair Parsons opened the public hearing.

MOTION: By Commissioner Phillips, seconded by Commissioner Peirona to continue the public hearing to June 6, 2000. The motion passed.

Continued Public Hearing - To consider public, Commission, and staff comments on the operation of the Single-Family Design Review Ordinance, and direction for any amendments to be considered at a future public hearing (Appl. No. 00-1015); CEQA Status: Exempt; City of Belmont (Applicant)

MOTION: By Commissioner Phillips, seconded by Commissioner Peirona to continue the public hearing to June 6, 2000. The motion passed.

Public Hearing - 400 Oxford Way; To consider design review to expand an existing single-family residence to include a new bedroom, bathroom, and family room. The proposed addition would enlarge the dwelling from 1,839 sq. ft. to 2,336 sq. ft., with the expanded area to be located at the side of the dwelling. The proposed expansion area encompasses approximately 497 sq. ft. (Appl. No. 99-1150); APN: 040-302-110; Zoned: R-1C; CEQA Status: Exempt; Esther Ludena (Applicant/Owner)

Contract Planner Ungo-McCormick presented the staff report recommending approval.

In response to Chair Parsons, Contract Planner Ungo-McCormick replied that the square footage included the auxiliary building which was approved for use as a storage building. Principal Planner de Melo added that staff did not have an opportunity to see the interior of the shed.

Esther Ludena, applicant, responded that the auxiliary building at the rear of the property was used for storage and that there was no water to the shed.

Chair Parsons opened the public hearing. No one came forward to speak.

MOTION: By Commissioner Peirona, seconded by Commissioner Purcell to close the public hearing. The motion passed.

Commissioner Purcell stated that she felt the new roof line would be a big improvement to the front of the house.

MOTION: By Commissioner Purcell, seconded by Commissioner Mathewson to approve Resolution 2000-19 approving a design review application for a single-family residential addition at 400 Oxford Way:

AYES: Phillips, Purcell, Mathewson, Petersen, Pierona, Parsons

Chair Parsons announced that the Commissions decision could be appealed to the City Council within 10 days.

Public Hearing - 554 El Camino Real; To consider amendments to the conditional use permit and design review related to the approved landscape plan for a cellular telephone facility (Appl. No. 00-1006); APN: 044-201-070 and -080; Zoned: C-3/D-1; CEQA Status: Exempt; Cellular One (Applicant); Amerco Real Estate Company (Owner)

Contract Planner Ungo-McCormick presented the staff report recommending approval.

The Commission reiterated that it was their intent that the redwood trees would grow 40-50 feet during their lifetime and that there was sufficient room in each planter to accommodate two trees. Principal Planner de Melo said that eventually portions of the building and the U-Haul sign would be screened by the trees, however, U-Haul would still have the advertising on the side of the trucks on site.

Chair Parsons asked if the applicant would like to speak.

Joanne Gundermann, Cellular One, stated that she was available to answer any questions.

MOTION: By Commissioner Peirona, seconded by Commissioner Purcell to close the public hearing. The motion passed.

The Commissions comments included that the maintenance agreement should include that the topping of trees would be prohibited and suggested planting another tree so there would be a total of four trees.

MOTION: By Commissioner Phillips, seconded by Commissioner Peirona to reopen the public hearing. The motion passed.

Joanne Gundermann, stated that Cellular One didn't have a problem requiring three or four trees, however, U-Haul wanted to plant three trees. She pointed out that the bushes were added around the one tree so it would be full in the area where there was only one tree and less shrubbery where there were two trees so that there would still be quite a bit of landscaping done with the one tree. Ms. Gundermann said that there was no representative from U-Haul present at the meeting, but she believed that if four trees were required there would be an on-going problem and they would probably have to come back to the Commission. Ms. Gundermann stated that U-Haul believed their trucks were part of their advertising and wanted southbound drivers to see their trucks and also believed that two trees would block more of their trucks. She stated that the landscaping would be completed as soon as the encroachment permit was issued.

A brief discussion ensued between the Commission, Ms. Gundermann, and staff regarding the planting of another tree.

MOTION: By Commissioner Phillips, seconded by Commissioner Purcell to close the public hearing. The motion passed.

MOTION: By Commissioner Phillips, seconded by Commissioner Purcell to approve Resolution No. 2000-20 approving an amendment of a conditional use permit and design review to allow revisions in the landscape plan for a cellular telephone facility at 554 El Camino Real and to add two conditions: 1) the landscape plan shall include a total of four coastal redwoods in addition to the proposed shrubs and ground cover within the frontage planter and two trees shall be located on each side of the planter, and 2) a maintenance agreement shall be entered into with the City of Belmont and property owner that guarantees permanent proper maintenance of landscaping within the public right-of-way and that topping of trees is prohibited:

AYES: Purcell, Mathewsen, Petersen, Peirona, Phillips, Parsons

Chair Parsons announced that the Commissions decision could be appealed to the City Council within 10 days.

Public Hearing - 819 Miramar Terrace; To consider design review and floor area ratio exception to construct a ground floor and second story addition of approximately 1,403 sq. ft. to an existing 2,874 sq. ft. home. The proposed new total would be 4,277 sq. ft. where the maximum permitted is 3,500 sq. ft. The site is 16,813 sq. ft. in area and contains a 6.6% slope that permits a 0.533 floor area ratio (FAR).

Without the Ordinance cap, the permitted floor area would be 8,961 sq. ft. The existing FAR is 0.171 and the proposed FAR is 0.254 (Appl. No. 00-1023); APN: 045-140-210; Zoned: R-1A ; CEQA Status: Exempt; CJW Architecture (Applicant); Mr. and Mrs. David Hawley(Owners)

Principal Planner de Melo presented the staff report recommending approval. Chair Parsons opened the public hearing.

David Hawley, owner and currently residing at 2124 Coronet Blvd., stated his reasons for locating in Belmont and the design of the addition. He said that their goal was to build a house that would add to the neighborhood.

Bill Wolpert, Associate Principal, CJW Architecture, informed the Commission that he did several plans, pushing the second story towards the back to one side or the other and had located it in such a way that it would meet the owner's needs and was a good compromise for the neighbors on both sides. He felt that it was very difficult to visualize what the overall mass and scale of the proposed house would be by looking at the orange net that was now located 12' above the existing house. Mr. Wolpert noted that the water now was draining across about a third of the back yard so that there was plenty of opportunity to catch the water with some sump pumps and gravel basins to retain the water on site as an alternative solution to the existing catch basin and culvert that went out to Holly Street which could be utilized. If height turned out to be a problem, a possible solution would be to reduce the height by a few inches or a foot, however, it would not address the view issues. He thought that they did a good job of designing the proposal in terms of scale and proportion. Mr. Wolpert thought that the views from across the street were barely over the top of the roof of the existing house and any type of second story was going to preclude the view toward the bay from that side.

The following people spoke:

Art Andrews, 816 Miramar Ter.,
Warren Lieberman, 824 Miramar Ter.,
John Andes, 832 Miramar Ter.,
Ed Ford 811 Miramar Ter.,
Robert Ledoux, 840 Miramar Ter.,
Gloria de Alba, 888 Holly Rd.

Summarized comments included: felt that the architectural style was not in accordance with the neighborhood and would be a very noticeable structure with two stories in the front whereas the other houses were hidden mostly behind trees and shrubbery; the proposed second story windows would have views into his living room and one of his downstairs bedrooms and felt that his privacy would be invaded; summarized an article Don't Let Addition Become an Eyesore by Arrol Gellner in the San Francisco Chronicle; a few of the neighbors were concerned with loss of views; concerned with existing drainage onto his property; suggested moving the second story addition to the rear of the house so that it would reduce the appearance of the size of it in the front; noted the two zoning designations since the west side of Miramar Terrace had a maximum square footage of 4,500 sq. ft. while the east side was 3,500 sq. ft.; and thought it was wonderful that the owners would fix their eyesore.

MOTION: By Commissioner Peirona, seconded by Commissioner Purcell to close the public hearing. The motion passed.

The Commissions comments included: this home would not be the largest in floor area if the square footage of the covered porch area was not included; the floor area ratio was not an issue; this house would be leveled and rebuilt again in a different architectural style; thought that the mix of the arts and crafts architectural style would lend itself nicely to the neighborhood especially with the appropriate amount of trees and vegetation around the house; concerned with loss of views of the East Bay; suggested redesigning the roofline of the garage by lowering it or adding a small overhang over the doorway or cutting off the corners; there were large lots in this neighborhood; concerned with the drainage; suggested continuing the public hearing so that the owner and architect could work with the neighbors to make some modifications and some photomontages that would address the neighbors concerns and then come back to the Commission. For the record, Chair Parsons stated that he and another Commissioner who was not here tonight met with Mr. Lieberman.

Mr. Wolpert said that he stated earlier that he would be more than happy to work with the neighbors to find a resolution. He asked for specific direction on how to proceed from this point with the neighbors involved.

Chair Parsons stated that it wasn't a matter of reducing the height a couple of inches. Chair Parsons said that he should get a copy of the photographs where these neighbors had shown that their views would be blocked and try to minimize those concerns.

Commissioner Phillips thought that the biggest concern was the 26' ridgeline which would affect the view corridor from across the street and suggested a combination of lowering the ridgeline by a minimum of five to eight ft. or setting back the second story.

Chair Parsons reiterated that the owner should work with his neighbors who felt they would be significantly impacted.

Mr. Hawley said he knew that the neighbors were supportive of the proposed project in general.

MOTION: By Commissioner Parsons, seconded by Commissioner Mathewson to reopen and continue the public hearing to May 16, 2000 so that staff could work with the applicant and perhaps the neighbors to try to mitigate some of their concerns. The motion passed.

REPORTS, STUDIES, UPDATES, AND COMMENTS

Chair Parsons reminded the Commission to return the prioritization of agenda items for the joint City Council/Planning Commission meeting.

Commissioner Purcell: 1) announced that the County Board of Supervisors would be holding a transportation summit Moving the Transportation Agenda at the Oracle Corporation on April 28, 2000, 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; 2) announced that a transportation workshop Design and Funding Solutions for Transit Friendly and Walkable Communities in Palo Alto on May 18 or in Oakland on May 19, and said that she would like to attend the Palo Alto workshop; 3) said that she spoke with Principal de Melo about the Ralston overpass earlier this evening and that a copy of the latest version should be given to each Commissioner; and 4) updated the Commission on an environmental forum on energy held in Palo Alto.

Principal Planner de Melo asked the Commission to call or email him to get an advance set of plans for 1506 Escondido Way which was scheduled for the May 2 agenda.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m. to meet for a regular session on May 2, 2000.

Marjorie W. Macris, AICP
Interim Planning Commission Secretary